

December/
January
2026

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News and views from Great Bardfield and Little Bardfield



Bardfield Times



Ten editions of Bardfield Times are published each year by volunteers from Great Bardfield and Little Bardfield parishes. Articles, letters, etc. for inclusion need to be received by the editors by the **14th of the month prior to publication**. The management team reserve the right to refuse, postpone or edit any material received for publication. Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the management team.

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Front cover: Newly refurbished historic post box by Mark Hitchcock
Above: Sing 4 Charity concert

Editorial

By popular request we have restarted our series of articles featuring 'Village People'. In this issue we talk to Kate Fox, long-time resident and Parish Clerk. So, if you've always wondered what a Parish Clerk does turn to page 20 to find out! If you'd like to be featured or have a suggestion please contact the BT Team.

There's been some excellent fundraising lately. The fabulous fireworks night raised a good sum for a range of worthy causes. And the recent Sing for Charity concert achieved a massive £3,300 for the Creamer Fund which benefits those who attend the Freshwell Health Centre. These events could not happen without the people who are prepared to give up their time to organise them. A special mention for Vicky Graves who has taken over the scheme to provide Christmas hampers for those who may be alone over Christmas. Please contact Vicky by December 7th if you know someone who would benefit from this scheme or if you're willing to help – see poster on p. 5. Christmas events planned include the Town Hall Carol Concert on December 8th and the combined churches carol service to be held in St Mary's on Sunday Dec 21st at 3pm.

Bardfield is well-known as 'The Artists' Village' and now that we have an extra colour page at the back of the BT we are starting a series of articles about artists in our village, past and present, both professional and amateur with an example of their work. The first artist in this series is John Aldridge who lived and worked at Place House for 50 years and was inspired by the village and its surroundings. His fine painting of Beslyns Pond will bring back memories for many. Our cover features the historical wooden postbox outside the Old Post Office in the High Street carefully restored by Mark Hitchcock. We're very pleased to see that Mac Beanland has recovered and his ever-popular Nature Notes is back. If you were wondering why there have been so many ladybirds about recently turn to page 16 and all will be revealed.

This is a double issue for December and January so the BT Team gets a well-deserved rest. Many thanks to all our volunteers and contributors. Please send your copy for the February issue by January 14th. With best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Janet Dyson

Great Bardfield Primary School

As we approach the end of the Autumn Term at Great Bardfield Primary School, the past few weeks have been filled with memorable moments and a strong sense of community. One of the most moving sights this November was the display of poppies along our school fence, each carefully crafted by a pupil and carrying a personal message of hope. On Tuesday 11th November, the whole school paused



Trekking in Epping Forest

for the two-minute silence to remember those who have made sacrifices for our country.

Community spirit has been at the heart of school life this month. Pupils and staff embraced 'Spots and Stripes' for Children in Need, and our Year 6 poppy sellers once again supported the Royal British Legion. Beyond our school gates, we've been proud to take part in many sports events across the Uttlesford community. A real highlight was the Sportshall Athletics competition at Felsted Independent School, where our Year 5 and 6 pupils achieved an

impressive second place; a fantastic testament to their teamwork, determination, and school spirit.

We have also faced some sad news this term: over the summer, our outdoor play equipment was condemned and deemed no longer safe to use. Thanks to the generosity of our school community, the PTA is already well on the way to raising funds to replace it. If you are able to and would like to contribute, please speak to Sara in our school office, who will be happy to help.



Great Bardfield Primary School
invites you to share...

‘Carols & Mince Pies’

We would like to invite senior
members of our community to a
celebration of Christmas
followed by mince pies in
the school hall on

Tuesday 16th December

2pm

Please ring or email the school office to confirm your seat.

Email: admin@greatbardfield.essex.sch.uk

Tel: 01371 810252



A highlight of this term has been the Key Stage Two field study visit to Epping Forest Field Study Centre. The children had a fantastic day exploring the forest and bringing the Geography National Curriculum to life. The visit also gave them the chance to develop new skills, enjoy themselves, and spark a love of the subject.

Looking ahead, December promises plenty of festive cheer. We'll begin with a much-loved tradition: our trip



Pupils enjoying the forest

to the Town Hall to enjoy the annual pantomime. The walk through our lovely village always adds to the excitement, and we are hugely grateful to our brilliant PTA for making this trip possible each year.

The Christmas season continues with a host of school events: the KS1 Nativity, our Carol Service at St Mary's Church, Christmas lunch, and the ever-popular children's shopping market; an afternoon that never fails to bring joy (and lots of very busy young shoppers!). It is always one of the most magical times of our school year.

Finally, we are delighted to once again welcome senior members of our community to school for an afternoon of carols and mince pies on Tuesday 16th December at 2pm. This gathering has quickly become a cherished tradition, and we would be thrilled to see many of you there. Please contact the school office to reserve your seat.

Liz Crow
Headteacher

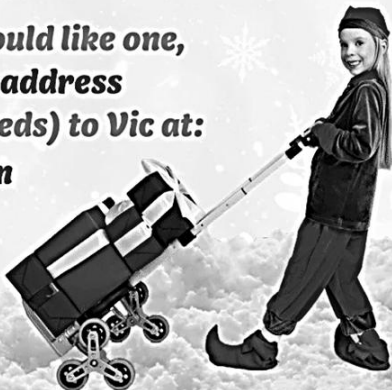
**Some local Christmas
elves are looking for
anyone in Great or
Little Bardfield who
might be alone this
Christmas!**



**To deliver a
Christmas
hamper to
with lots of
treats inside!**

**If you know anyone who would like one,
please send their name and address
(with any food or access needs) to Vic at:
Victoria.graves@gmail.com
or 07444 556257
before**

*Now extended
to
December 7th*



Great Bardfield Parish Council Report

Firework Night

Despite a wet afternoon this was another successful and enjoyable evening organised by Jess Walmesley and her team, and involving the combined efforts of the School PTA, the Pre-School, Little Bardfield Cricket Club, the Rocketeers and others. The final figures were not yet available at the time of the last Parish Council meeting, but confirmation was received that costs were covered and each group would receive income from the profit made. Thank you to all those involved in continuing this long-standing, popular, village event and to all those attending to make it a success.

Remembrance Day

The service organised by St. Mary's Church and supported by our excellent brass band was well attended and we received positive comments from our District Councillors who both attended. The Chair of the Parish Council, Carolynne Ruffle, laid a wreath in remembrance of those who have lost their lives in conflicts across the world and those from Great and Little Bardfield who are named on the memorial, were specifically mentioned.

More Thank Yous

The Parish Council are very grateful for the volunteer work being undertaken by two local residents in helping maintain the playground area for the benefit of children and their families. We also thank those residents who help monitor the footpath network. It is always pleasing to hear from those who can provide some of their time to the village in addition to work undertaken by the parish clerk, village caretaker and council members.

Changes to Waste Services/Bin Collections

All residents should have received a leaflet from Braintree District Council (BDC) about the changes to bin collections due to start in June 2026. This involves increased home recycling and changes to collection times and will also mean more bins. BDC has undertaken an assessment to determine whether you live in a property where it is not practical to store more bins. All residents will be written to by the end of 2025 to confirm if you will receive a standard or non-standard waste collection service.

We are assured that a printed schedule will be made available to all households with the calendar of collections as it will be more complicated, with certain bins collected weekly, fortnightly or every 3 weeks.

Further information is available from BDC at www.braintree.gov.uk/bins-waste-recycling/changes-waste-collections

Planning Applications

- The Barn at South Acre, Braintree Road. The Parish Council raised concerns about several aspects of the design including height, volume and materials proposed
- Littles Farm, Beslyns Lane – change of use from a barn to a dwelling. No objections pending a full planning application

No objections to tree works at:

- Place Farm, Dunmow Road
- 4 Rutland Place, Bridge Street
- Gobions, Dunmow Road
- Rosetta, Bridge End

Neighbourhood Plan

The next stage is for the draft plan to be publicised by the local planning authority for a 6-week period (Regulation 16) prior to sending the plan document, any supporting documentation and comments to an independent examiner. The local planning authority will also notify anyone referred to in the consultation statement that the plan has been received.

We understand that BDC intend to publicise our plan from 1st December for 8 weeks ending the 26th January (2 extra weeks have been added to take into account the Christmas period).

Highways

A meeting has been arranged in Great Bardfield in early December where members of the Parish Council will meet our County Councillor, Cllr Butland, the Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways, Tom Cunningham, and representatives of Essex Highways. We will be discussing various areas of concern including the appalling state of the pavements in the village, long-standing potholes, over-sized lorries negotiating our narrow streets and parking at junctions.

Bin Collections – December 2025 and January 2026

Tuesday December 2nd	Clear Recycling Sacks & Food Bin Green Bin (for subscribers only)
Tuesday December 9th	Grey Bin & Food Bin
Tuesday December 16th	Clear Recycling Sacks & Food Bin Green Bin (for subscribers only)
Tuesday December 23rd	Grey Bin & Food Bin
Wednesday December 31st (following bank hol.)	Clear Recycling Sacks & Food Bin NOT Green Bin
Wednesday January 7th	Grey Bin & Food Bin
Tuesday January 13th	Clear Recycling Sacks & Food Bin Green Bin (for subscribers only)
Tuesday January 20th	Grey Bin & Food Bin
Tuesday January 27th	Clear Recycling Sacks & Food Bin Green Bin (for subscribers only)

Next Parish Council Meetings

The next Parish Council meeting will be held at 7.00pm on Wednesday 10th December 2025, in the Committee Room at the Town Hall, The January meeting will take place at the same time and place on Wednesday 14th January.

Our meetings are open to the public. Please contact Kate Fox, Clerk, if you plan to attend on 810111 or by email at clerk@greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk.

This report comes with Christmas greetings and our very best wishes to all residents for 2026.

Carolynne Ruffle
Chairperson



TOWN HALL CAROL CONCERT

Monday 8th December 2025

Doors Open 6.30 pm Concert Starts 7.00 pm

With

Bardfield Community Choir

&

Bardfield Brass

Mulled Wine & Mince Pies

All Welcome, Limited Seating



Horticultural Society

We held our AGM in October. Many thanks to everyone who came; we had an exceptional turnout. The President and Chair's positions were up for renewal. Peter Morris was re-elected as President. There were no nominations for Chair and Linda Prior was standing down after 15 years; she will thankfully remain on the Committee. Thanks were given to Carole Maddock and Sharon Kennedy for their time on the Committee. Linda Prior thanked all the Officers and Committee for their support and hard work during the year. Peter Morris presented Linda with flowers and a garden centre token.

After the AGM we had plates of various cheeses and biscuits with a choice of wine or fruit juice. We all very much enjoyed the talk given by Suzy Nicholson "My Life in Gardening". She talked about her background in gardening - she started off in Devon and then went to do displays at Audley End, worked part time at Beeches Nursery and helped with various displays at Chelsea Flower Show. She also spent time working at South Farm Royston - a wedding venue, then went on to work at Spains Hall; looking after the vegetable gardens and flower beds - to great effect. She showed us some lovely pictures of her work.



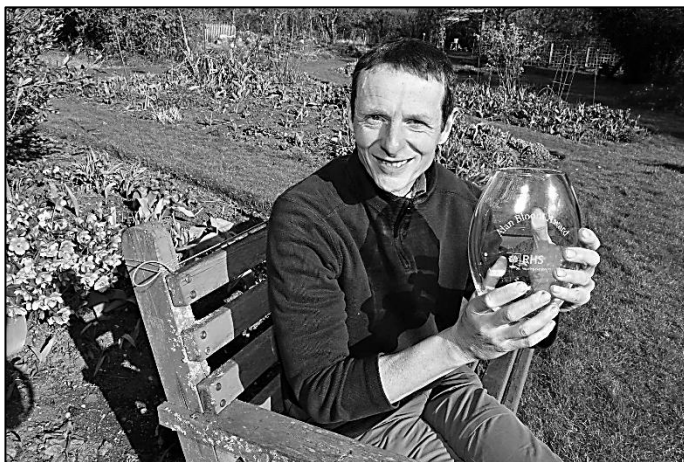
Linda Prior and Peter Morris

Floral Art

Our next event will be on **Friday, December 5th** - this will be a Floral Art morning in the Quaker Meeting House from 10am until 12.30pm. The theme this year is **“A Seasonal Table Decoration”**. There will be refreshments including cakes and a raffle. This event is already fully booked. All materials will be supplied, but please remember to bring secateurs or a strong pair of scissors. Mandy Boon will be on hand to demonstrate, give tips and plenty of guidance.

Spring Talk

Our first event in 2026 will be on **Saturday, February 28th** at 2.30pm.



Dr Andrew Ward with his RHS trophy

This will be a talk entitled **“60 Must have Plants”**. Our speaker will be Dr Andrew Ward, owner of Norwell Nursery and gardens in the Midlands. Andrew trained as a plant breeder and opened the nursery and

gardens with his wife, Helen, over 30 years ago. It is a small nursery specialising in choice and unusual herbaceous perennials and alpiners. The nursery is based around a one acre “Plantsman’s garden” which holds over 2,500 different varieties of plants. It has featured in many magazines including Country Life, Gardens Illustrated and the RHS Magazine. Andrew also holds the National Collection of hardy chrysanthemums and astrantias. He will be bringing plants for sale.

Tickets will be available in the New Year from Linda Prior (07968 184645) or Lynne Joyce (01371 810524) or by electronic payment - see below. £10 for members and £12 for non-members. There will be a raffle, refreshments and homemade cakes.

Spring Show



Last year we had a wonderful display of daffodils

Our Spring Show will be held in the Town Hall on **Saturday, March 14th**. Show Schedules will be available in January 2026. We can all look forward to next spring when our gardens will be full of brightly coloured daffodils.

Annual Membership is £5.00 pp and has the benefits of reduced prices to our events.

For any information about Bardfield Horticultural Society please contact Linda Prior 07969 184845.

To purchase tickets for the spring talk or for membership:
electronic payment as follows:

Account name: Bardfield Horticultural Society

Sort code: 09 01 55

Account number: 02585706

Please put the item you are paying for (spring talk or membership) as the reference.

Or cash payments to Lynne Joyce 01371 810524

Greenfingers

Guess the pots of bulbs are planted and surrounded with choice evergreens and violas or pansies? Think they lack interest while waiting for the bulbs to flower? Perhaps you have complemented



Winter pot of violas

with grasses or herbs like thymes and rosemary as they are evergreen? But think of using *parsley* - fresh and bright green leaves, a pot available from a supermarket and split easily into three. Hey presto your pots are furnished but maybe add a few cut stems of a berried shrub or tree and Christmas has arrived!

Not many jobs in December and January, so ...

- ✿ Gather the fallen leaves, put in a black bag and pierce holes to let air in to help decompose. Hide away behind one's shed till end of next year when there is useful leaf mould.
- ✿ Protect any precious plants that are susceptible to cold. Pots of agapanthus are best put in a sheltered spot, perhaps under a conifer, wrap in fleece, sacking or simply put them in the garage or shed. Dry is the key to keeping them. Heaps of wood chips around those in the ground, e.g. salvias and alstroemerias.
- ✿ Tend your soon to be beautiful hellebores. Cut off old leaves, feed and give them fresh compost or bark to keep muddy splashes off the blooms.
- ✿ And finally, get your pots lined up near the house for better winter viewing till Spring 2026 arrives.



White hellebores



Bardfield Horticultural Society

60 Must Have Plants

A talk by

Dr Andrew Ward

from Norwell Nurseries, Norfolk

Saturday 28th February 2.30 pm
GB Town Hall

Plants for sale
Raffle, tea, coffee, cake

Tickets: £10.00 members
 £12.00 non-members

From: Linda Prior (07968 184645)
 Lynne Joyce (01371 810524)

Sing for Charity

The Sing for Charity evening organised in aid of the Creamer Fund was a great success. Wethersfield Village Hall was packed and the audience was entertained by 90 singers from two local choirs. Singing for All directed by Lorraine Patient delighted the audience with selections from Abba and other popular songs.



The Bardfield Community Choir directed by Janet Dyson gave a rousing performance of songs from the shows including Phantom of the Opera and a memorable version of Bohemian Rhapsody. Local singing duo G&T took the audience on a musical journey from the 1950s to the present and the evening ended with singers and audience joining together to sing Neil Diamond's Sweet Caroline. It was a fantastic evening and so good to see so many singers from our villages coming together to share their talents. The biggest raffle ever with prizes generously donated by local businesses and residents helped to raise a grand total of over £3,300 for the Creamer Fund. Well done to all involved in the organisation of this event.

'Phoenix'

Nature Notes – Ladybirds

Ladybirds seem to have attracted quite a lot of attention towards the end of September and into the beginning of October with people saying they have seen groups of ladybirds gathering in the corners of their windows and some warm places. This is quite a common occurrence; if there are a lot of ladybirds about and we suddenly get a bit of a cold snap they huddle together to keep warm and the corners of windows facing the sun are definite favourites.



Ladybirds are quite remarkable little insects and fit very well into the group of creatures which can be classed as friends to farmers and gardeners. The reason being their main food is aphids, one of the three main pests of farmers and growers, the other two being slugs and flea beetles. We have always had our native ladybird which is bright red with seven black spots but we are now seeing increasing numbers of an immigrant in the form of the Asian ladybird. Some were introduced into this country to help with aphid control and others have got carried here by the wind. It is very easy to distinguish between the two; as I have said the native ladybird is red with seven black spots but the Asian ladybird also known as the harlequin ladybird, is a mixture of colours from yellow to pink, all shades of red with random numbers of black spots from one upwards, some are even black with red spots. All ladybirds will bite us but the Asian ladybirds are more aggressive and do bite more frequently.

Ladybirds do hibernate through the winter in frost proof places and wake up as the weather starts to warm, once awake and active they go in search of food i.e. aphids. When they find some, they will mate and the females will lay clusters of yellow eggs stuck to leaves close to a source of aphids. After about a week the eggs hatch into larvae which are little alligator lookalikes with ferocious appetites, growing rapidly, they keep shedding their skins to allow for their increasing size. Once fully grown

the larvae develop into pupa which rest for about a week, then emerge as a ladybird which takes but a few days to mature and achieve their full colour and spots. In years when there are lots of aphids about the mature ladybirds will keep on breeding and the young ones will also breed so we can get a lot of ladybirds.



Ladybird larvae – alligator lookalike

One very memorable aphid-ladybird year was 1976; farms and gardens were absolutely plastered with aphids. The merchants who sold agro - chemicals sold out of insecticides with waiting lists of customers who were rationed as any supplies became available. I remember trying to spray a field of wheat and having to stop each time I reached the end of the row to turn off the engine so that a seething mass of aphids could fall out of the radiator; if I didn't notice the engine would boil. I can't remember how many weeks we suffered with the aphids but as if by magic relief appeared in the form of ladybirds, literally thousands of them eating aphids at a rate of knots. All was fine and dandy until the ladybirds ran out of aphids and they tried to eat us. Yes, ladybirds do bite!

Mac Beanland

The Tuesday Club

Our November meeting fell on Armistice Day, an appropriate date for Will Edwards to speak to us about “What Happened to Harry”, his great uncle who died in WWI. That was all that Will knew about Harry and he wanted to know more.

The search started with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Harry William Kennard was listed on the site, with his service number, regiment, date of death and where he was buried. Of the 750,000 UK soldiers who died in WWI only about half have a known grave. Soldiers who had died of their wounds would have been identified while being cared for, whereas soldiers who died on the battle fields were less likely to be identified. So, this gave some idea of the circumstances of Harry's death, but no detail. Unfortunately, the service records for WWI were destroyed during WW2, but the medal records have survived and we know that Harry was awarded the Star Medal, the Victory Medal and the British War Medal. These medals were awarded for service during specific dates and so Will was able to piece together where Harry had fought during his time of service. Will then found a book which recounted the stories of the field ambulances which worked on the battlefields. He discovered that this included an extract from a diary kept by one of the workers, which mentioned a Harry William Kennard who was caught in a blast with his fellow soldiers on 26th May 1916, the only gunner to die that day. He was aged 23. So, the story was now complete. Will has since been to France to visit Harry's grave, and is pleased that his memory will live on and that future generations of the family will know more about him.

In December we will be holding our Christmas Lunch in the Town Hall, and in January we have our AGM, where existing members can renew their subscription and new members can join us. Membership for the year will be £30, which includes all speakers and refreshments, and visitors will be welcome to join us for £5 per meeting. We have been delighted to welcome many new faces to our group during 2025 and with an impressive list of speakers lined up for 2026 we hope to see many more. Meanwhile, we wish everyone a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Cherry Whitby

**For more details, please contact the Club Secretary
Marilyn Edwards on 01371 810555**

the GREAT
BARDFIELDcharities
Charity number 207305



CAN WE HELP YOU?

If you live in Great Bardfield, are a group or organisation benefiting Great Bardfield residents then you are eligible to apply for financial assistance.

For more information please contact one of the Trustees:

Pat Coles - 01371 810995, Mick Gell - 01371 810113

Nick Holland - 07795 280647, Annika Woodcock - 07900 491636

Cathy Stuttle - 07711 880965, Rev Alex Shannon - 01371 810309

Or email GreatBardfieldCharities@gmail.com

Village People: Kate Fox

If the village of Great Bardfield was likened to a Swan with the beauty and elegance of the long necked bird representing our historic buildings and stunning vistas, then a major part of the powerhouse beneath the water would be Kate Fox, quietly and industriously working away to maintain the smooth running of so much of our community.

In 1983 Kate and her husband Ian came upon Great Bardfield *“by lucky chance and as soon as we arrived here we knew it was the place we wanted to live”*. They moved to Great Bardfield with their young son and within a few years both Ian’s parents and Kate’s had also moved to the village. Straight away Kate and Ian wanted to contribute to the



Kate in her home office

community, Kate served on the School PTA, Ian joined the Bardfield Players as a set builder and they made many really good friends and were fortunate to have wonderful neighbours in the village. Sadly Ian, a skilled electrician, died in 2018, the couple having thoroughly enjoyed their life together in Great Bardfield and Ian is fondly remembered by many in the village today.

Having responded to an advert in the BT, Kate started as Parish Clerk in 1989. Originally the role was quite small but over the 36 years has grown almost out of recognition to a *“full-on job because of the amount of knowledge needed, the training required and exams you have to take”*. Kate studied for four years to attain her Certificate in Local Council Administration (similar to a degree), and then every year she undertakes training to keep herself up-to-date with new statutes and Local Council regulations. It is Kate’s knowledge of law and finance and her dedication

to the role that enables Great Bardfield Parish Council to retain its status as a 'Quality Parish Council'.

Part of the responsibility of the Clerk is the Community Information Point (CIP) which was set up with a grant from Essex County Council in 2002. The CIP is next to the Town Hall and open Thursday and Saturday 10.00am – 12.00 noon. Apart from free recycling bags and dog poo bags the CIP holds a wealth of information, local maps and memorabilia. If you have a question for the Parish Council, it is staffed by Councillor Iain Graham and the Annual Report is also available. In addition, any of the past films (DVD) shown by the Bardfield Cinema Club are available to hire for just £1, proceeds going back to the cinema club.



Great Bardfield CIP

As if Kate wasn't busy enough, she is also Treasurer of The Bardfield Players and advertising editor for the BT. Kate particularly enjoys volunteering in the community bookshop, *Between the Lines*. She loves cooking, principally French cuisine, delighting in several food based holidays in France. She is an avid reader having been a member of the same book club for 15 years!

With her contribution to so many aspects of our community Kate truly is an integral cog in the machine that is Great Bardfield.

Helen McGlynn

Do you know someone that we could include in this section of the magazine? Would you like to write an article about a friend or family member or simply suggest someone, all ideas are gratefully received by the editor.

Finchingfield and District Royal British Legion

Presents

TRIP TO SEE THE LONDON CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

£20 PER PERSON

LEAVE AT
3PM | **SATURDAY**
13TH
DECEMBER

**PICK UP AND RETURN
TO FINCHINGFIELD
GREEN**

**CONTACT US ON
FACEBOOK OR CALL
IVAN ON 07525751179 TO
BOOK YOUR TICKET**

A £10 deposit PP will be
required when booking

Town Hall Happenings

As we look forward to Christmas the Town Hall will be busy.

On 4th, 5th and 6th December Bardfield Players will be presenting a Murder Mystery. Also, on 5th Bardfield Primary School will be visiting to see the annual pantomime arranged by the PTA.

On Monday 8th we have our annual Carol Concert with Bardfield Brass and Bardfield Choir. Everyone welcome with mulled wine and mince pies.

Looking forward to 2026 we have a Quiz Night on 21st March. Art Show 24th and 25th May. We are also arranging "An Audience with Henry VIII" in April and looking forward to the return of "Ben Waters and his band" on 24th October.

Don't forget our new website www.greatbardfieldtownhall.com to see updates, events and contact details.

Finally, I would like to thank our committee members, caretaker and hall users for their help and time during the past year. Have a Happy Christmas and a good New Year.

John Maidman

Chair Great Bardfield Town Hall



Royal British Legion

Finchingfield and District Branch

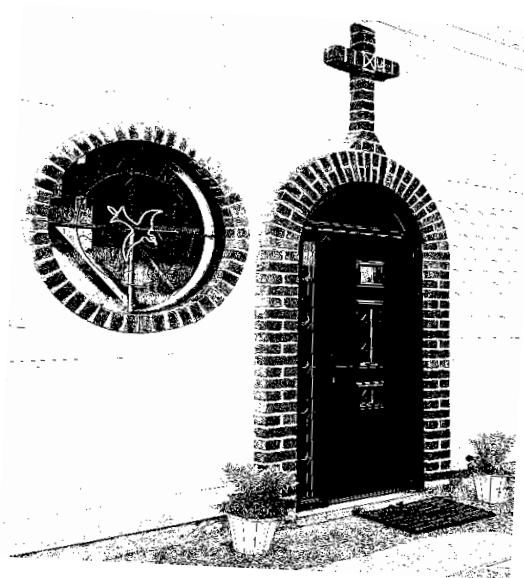
Carol Service 6 December 3pm

This year we are again hosting a Carol Service on behalf of the "C" Group in Finchingfield Church. As last year, we will be supported by our local choir Singing4All and some of our local schools will be performing. We warmly welcome all families to this service.

HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC CHURCH

Braintree Road, Great Bardfield

E mail celestineiheme2016@gmail.com



Sunday Mass – 9.30 am

Weekday Services

Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 9.30 am

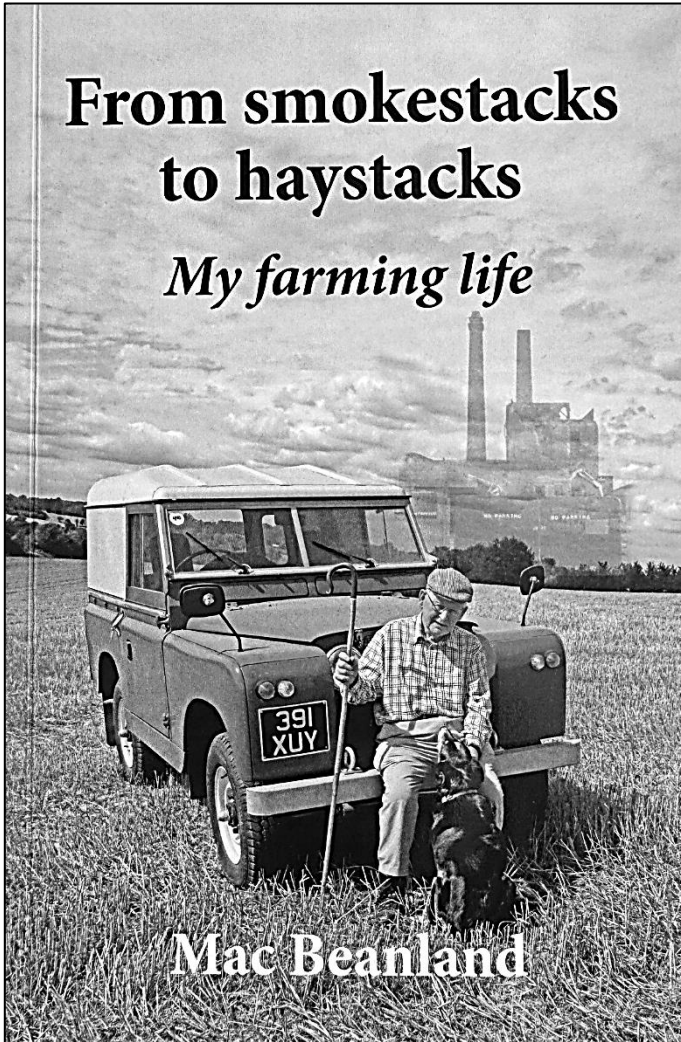
Rosary and Holy Hour – following Friday Mass

Carol Service

shared with St Mary's 21st December 2025

All welcome

Welcome Back Mac



Ed: I'm sure everyone was pleased to read *Nature Notes* in this edition of the BT and to welcome Mac Beanland back to our wonderful group of contributors after an illness. His book 'From smokestacks to haystacks' is available from the bookshop *Between the Lines* for £9.99, a perfect Christmas gift!

From the Vicarage...

One of the delightful fixtures of the Advent and Christmas seasons is the Nativity Play. Whether this takes place in school, church, hall or even outside, and whether it takes the form of a traditional retelling of the events of the first Christmas, or whether it takes a fresh perspective, it requires more than one person. Helpfully, the cast size can often be flexible, with variable numbers of angels, shepherd and magi (the Bible only tells us that they brought three gifts!), and sometimes parts for animals too, but there is a minimum number greater than one, and the role which is the most important is the one without any lines – indeed, it's often taken by a doll!

Christmas is therefore a good time for us to remember the value of cooperation. Each person (and indeed animal!) had an important part to play in the events of Jesus' birth: the hospitable inn keeper who provided space in the stable even though the inn was full; the donkey (not mentioned in the Bible, but a fixture of the tradition!) carrying Mary to Bethlehem; the angels announcing the news of what had taken place; the shepherds and magi responding, and representing firstly the people into which Jesus was born, and secondly the nations of the wider world; the animals who found themselves having to give up their feeding trough, traditionally shown as offering the adoration of all creatures before their Creator; Joseph the protector of the Holy Family; and Mary, the one whose willingness to follow God's request made her the one to bring the Holy Child into the world. The plan of God we see unfolding in our nativity plays is one in which everyone has something important to do, everyone's contribution is valuable. And God himself says nothing at all – 'How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given,' says a favourite carol. The wordlessness of the infant Jesus (which depends not on whether we take literally that line from *Away in a Manger* saying 'No crying he makes') affirms the value of our lives and actions. As the cast of the nativity draws around the manger, God's presence brings their parts into harmony with one another, not by dictating, but through the magnetic pull of love. As we gather in communities and families this Christmas-tide, may our acts of gathering in adoration draw all our parts in the drama of the human story into harmony with one another, as we sing, 'O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord.'

Rev'd/Fr Alex

St. Mary's Church

Great Bardfield

MUNCHKINS

Baby & Toddler GROUP



Every Tuesday morning

In Church from 10 am

Come and join us for stories, singing and
refreshments

We look forward to you seeing you.

Services for December 2025 & January 2026

Saturday 6 December

3pm RBL District Carol Service – Finchingfield

Sunday 7 December – Second Sunday of Advent

9am Holy Communion (traditional language) – Cornish Hall End

9.30am Morning Prayer – Shalford

10.30am Sung Communion Service – Great Bardfield

11am Prayer & Pilgrimage (Celtic Morning Prayer) – Wethersfield

4pm Sung Compline – Little Bardfield

Sunday 14 December – Third Sunday of Advent

8am Holy Communion (traditional language) – Shalford

9.30am Children's Carol Service – Finchingfield

10.30am Morning Prayer – Great Bardfield

11am Holy Communion (traditional language) – Wethersfield

4pm Sung Evensong – Great Bardfield

6pm Carol Service – Wethersfield

Sunday 21 December – Fourth Sunday of Advent

9am Holy Communion (traditional language) – Finchingfield

9.30am Morning Prayer – Shalford

10.30am Sung Communion Service – Great Bardfield

11am Crib Service – Wethersfield

3pm Joint Churches Carol Service – Great Bardfield

6pm Carol Service – Cornish Hall End

Christmas Eve

3pm Crib Service – Finchingfield

3pm Christingle Service – Great Bardfield

5pm Carols by Candlelight – Shalford

9pm 'Early' Midnight Mass – Little Bardfield

11.30pm Midnight Mass – Wethersfield

Christmas Day

9am Family Communion Service – Cornish Hall End

9.30am Family Communion Service – Shalford

10.30am Family Communion Service – Great Bardfield

11am Family Communion Service – Finchingfield

Friday 26 December – St Stephen

10am Communion Service with hymns – Shalford

Sunday 28 December – St John the Evangelist (transferred)

10.30am Benefice Communion Service – Cornish Hall End

2.30pm Carols in the Cowshed – Boydells Dairy Farm

Sunday 4 January – The Feast of the Epiphany (transferred)

9am Holy Communion (traditional language) – Cornish Hall End

9.30am Morning Prayer – Shalford

10.30am Sung Communion Service – Great Bardfield

11am Prayer & Pilgrimage (Celtic Morning Prayer) – Wethersfield

4pm Sung Compline – Little Bardfield

Sunday 11 January – The Baptism of Christ / Plough Sunday

9.30am Benefice Communion Service – Little Bardfield

We warmly encourage members of our community to join the Plough Sunday service and celebrations at Thaxted Parish Church at 11am this Sunday.

4pm Sung Evensong – Finchingfield

**Sunday 18 January – The Second Sunday of Epiphany
and the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

9am Holy Communion (traditional language) – Finchingfield

9.30am Morning Prayer – Shalford

10.30am Sung Communion Service – Great Bardfield

11am Family Service – Wethersfield

Sunday 25 January – The Conversion of St Paul

8am Holy Communion (traditional language) – Great Bardfield

9.30am Parish Communion Service – Shalford

10.30am Morning Prayer – Great Bardfield

11am Family Communion Service – Wethersfield

Regular Services and Events during the week

Monday

8.45am Morning Prayer – Finchingfield

1.30pm 'Faithful Fiction' book club (1st weeks)

Between the Lines, Great Bardfield

Tuesday

8.45am Morning Prayer – Great Bardfield

10am Baby & Toddler Group – Great Bardfield

‘St Mary’s Munchkins’ story & song time with refreshments

Thursday

8.45am Morning Prayer – Wethersfield

10am Prayer Group (1st, 3rd & 5th weeks)

Coffee Morning (2nd & 4th weeks) – Shalford

Coffee Morning (3rd week) – Cornish Hall End

10.30am Eucharist – Little Bardfield

Friday

8.45am Morning Prayer – Shalford

Saturday

10.30am (3rd weeks) Coffee Morning – Wethersfield

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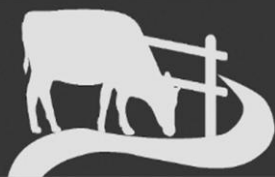
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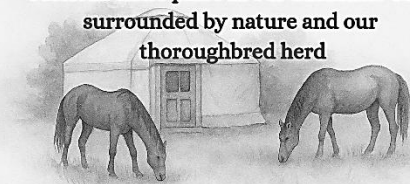
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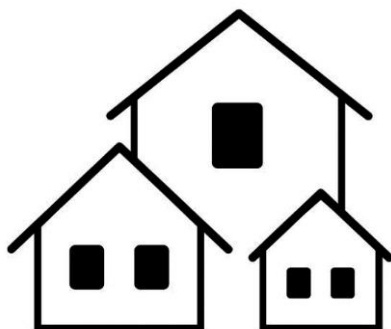
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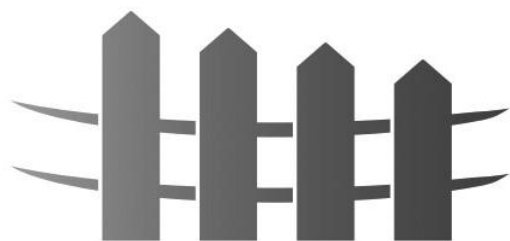
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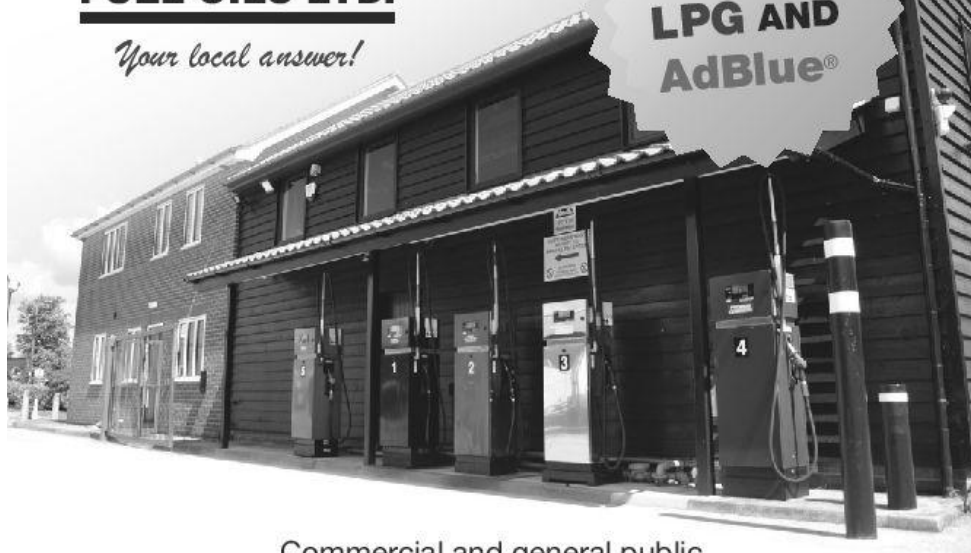
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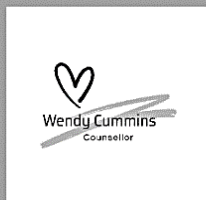


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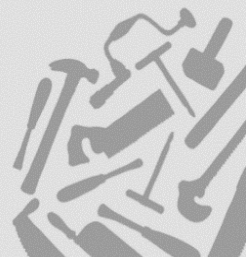
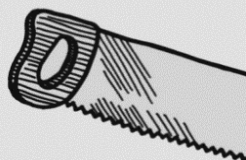
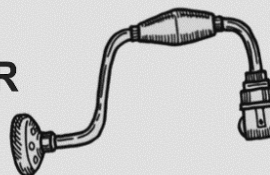
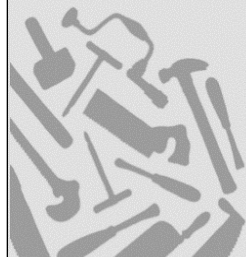
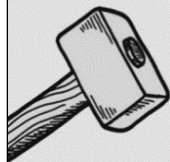


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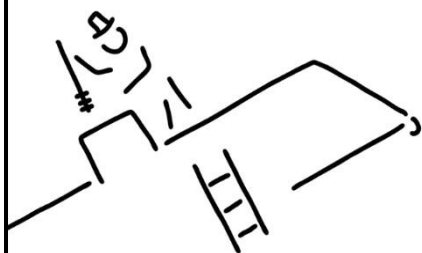
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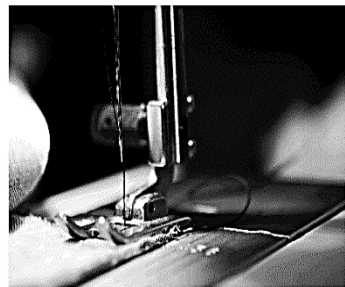
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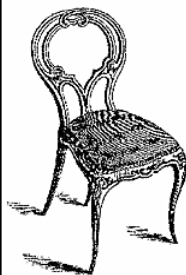
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Town Hall Diary

December 2025

Monday 1 st	Bardfield players	7.00pm
Tuesday 2 nd	Dance fit class	9.30am
	Mobility & balance	10.30am
	Bardfield players	7.00pm
Wednesday 3 rd	Pilates	11.00am
	Bardfield players	7.00pm
Thursday 4 th	Play	7.00pm
Friday 5 th	School panto	12.30pm
	Play	7.00pm
Saturday 6 th	Play	7.00pm
Sunday 7 th	Bardfield players	9.00am
Monday 8 th	Town hall carols	7.00pm
Tuesday 9 th	Tuesday club	12.00am
Wednesday 10 th	Pilates	11.00am
	Parish council meeting	7.00pm
	Private booking	7.00pm
Friday 12 th	Cinema club	7.30pm
Tuesday 16 th	Dance fit class	9.30am
	Mobility & balance	10.30am
Wednesday 17 th	Private function	7.00pm
Tuesday 25 th	Dance fit class	9.30am
	Mobility & Balance	10.30am
	Choir	8.00pm
Wednesday 24 th	Private function	7.00pm
Wednesday 31 st	Private function	7.00pm

January 2026

Tuesday 6 th	Dance fit class	9.30am
	Mobility & balance	10.30am
	Choir	8.00pm
Friday 9 th	Cinema club	7.30pm
Tuesday 13 th	Dance fit class	9.30am
	Mobility & balance	10.30am
	Choir	8.00pm
	Tuesday club	2.00pm
Wednesday 14 th	Parish council meeting	7.00pm
Tuesday 20 th	Dance fit class	9.30am
	Mobility & balance	10.30am
	Choir	8.00pm
Tuesday 27 th	Dance fit class	9.30am
	Mobility & balance	10.30am
	Choir	8.00pm

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Clerk to the Parish Council

Kate Fox clerk@greatbardfield-pc.gov.uk 810111

Councillors

Janet Dyson 07957 483207

Iain Graham 07831 595555

Darren Hockley 810836

Peter Walmsley 07843 498253

Mark Wells 07788 318118

Richard Winsborough 07917462320

Little Bardfield Parish

Chair of the Parish Council

Andrew Davies cllr.adavies@littlebardfield-pc.gov.uk

Clerk to the Parish Council

Sophie Wolker clerk@littlebardfield-pc.gov.uk

Braintree District Council

Councillors

Cllr Michael Staines 07922 487666

Cllr Mark Ault 07903 744481

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Councillor

Cllr Mike Tayler cllrtayler@uttlesford.gov.uk

Police

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1st Finchingfield Scout Group

Mark Wells 810447 mark.2millside@btinternet.com

Bardfield Charities

Nick Holland 07795 280647

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Linda Prior 07969 184845

Bardfield Players

Ian Ruffle 810986

Gt Bardfield Allotments

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Gt Bardfield Bell Ringers

Nick & Sarah Holland 810209

Gt Bardfield Historical Society

tim_regan82@hotmail.com

Gt Bardfield Pre-School

Kathy King 811580

Gt Bardfield Primary School

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Muddogs Youth Football

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Tuesday Club

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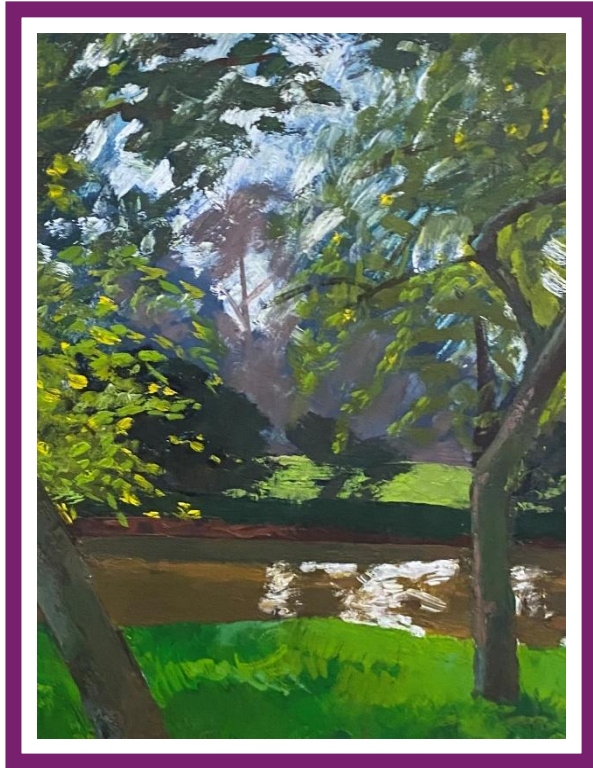
to the end of September 2.00 – 4.00pm

Community Information Point

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John Aldridge cycled into Great Bardfield in 1933. He lived in Place House, then known as 'The Place', until his death in 1983. Like the other artists who came to live in Bardfield over the years, he was inspired by the surrounding countryside, the village houses and farm buildings, and the people. His own house and the beautiful garden he created there feature in many of his works. The Bawden Room, adjacent to the Town Hall, houses the village collection of work by the Bardfield Artists. It is curated and run by the Historical Society and we are delighted to have received an extremely generous gift of two oil paintings, one by Duffy Ayres who lived in Ethel House and the other a view of Beslyns Pond by John Aldridge, a detail of which is above – the vibrant and varied shades of green and the reflected light are characteristic of his work. Both paintings will shortly be on display in the Bawden Room which is open, free, on Sundays and Bank Holidays from 2-4pm from Easter to the end of September, or by appointment. There are regular group walks and talks about the artists starting from the Bawden Room – to book a group of between 6 and 15 email drjanetdyson@gmail.com. The Historical Society is interested in purchasing works of the artists to add to their collection, with professional valuation.

Bardfield Cinema Club



Great Bardfield Town Hall

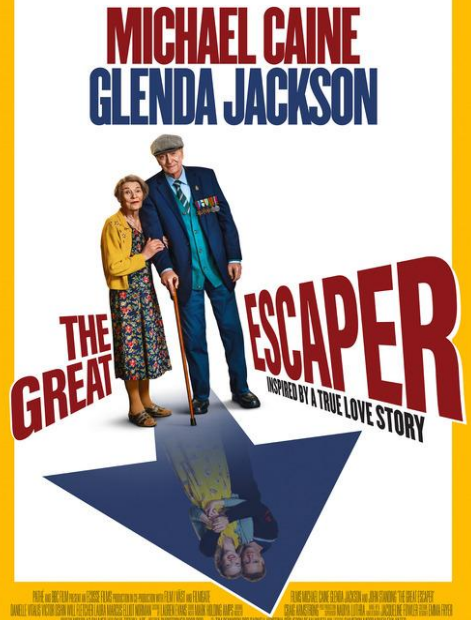
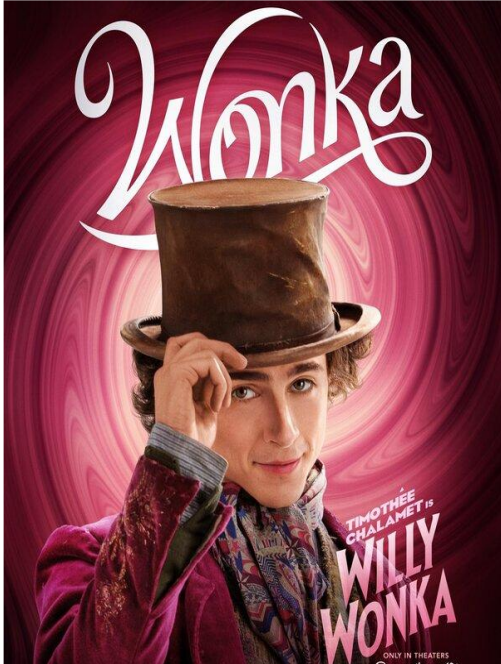
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December 12th



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